

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 0114

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FOR PETTERSON S/P AND AF/S ONLY

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT SOCI SHUM SF

SUBJECT: RACE RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

REFERENCE: STATE 4009

1. AREAS IN WHICH WE FEEL CHANGES MAY BE POSSIBLE WERE ADDRESSED INDIRECTLY IN POLICY REVIEW (PRETORIA 4285) AND IN AIRGRAM ON LABOR RELATIONS JUST POUCHED (A-05).

2. WE DO NOT THINK THERE IS LIKELY TO BE ANY RELAXATION OF THE MAJOR PIECES OF LEGISLATION GOVERNING APARTHEID, AND IN FACT EXPECT PARLIAMENT TO ENACT LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED PERMANENT SECURITY COMMISSION WHICH WOULD REINFORCE EXISTING CAPABILITIES TO ACT AGAINST ANY WHO SEEM TO STEP OUT OF LINE.

3. THE FACT THAT THE WEST, PARTICULARLY THE US, IS APPARENTLY FAILING TO CLOSE RANKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA ON THE ONE ISSUE, THE COMMUNIST THREAT (ANGOLA), WHICH THEY HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT WOULD WIN US TOWARD THEM, WILL LEAVE THEM MORE RESISTANT THAN EVER TO WESTERN IMPORTUNINGS. IF MPLA EMERGES AS WINNER AT OAU SUMMIT OR ON THE BATTLEFIELD, WE ANTICIPATE A STRENGTHENING OF THE LAAGER MENTALITY, DRAWING MANY NON-AFRIKAANERS ALONG WITH IT, TO A DEGREE THAT WILL MORE NAROWLY LIMIT ANY TENDENCY VORSTER MAY HAVE HAD TOWARD FORMAL LIBERALIZATION. WHAT HE DOES WITH REGARD TO THE COLORED ISSUES AND
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THE LONG AWAITED THERON COMMISSION REPORT MAY PROVIDE CONCRETE

EVIDENCE. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO EASING; HIS NEW YEAR MESSAGES CERTAINLY GAVE NO HINT OF LIBERALIZATION.

4. AT MOST WE CAN SEE ONLY MARGINAL RELAXATION OF APARTHEID LINKED TO BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES, BUT NOT CHANGING POWER STRUCTURE. HIGHER WAGES FOR BLACKS, MORE JOB MOBILITY, PERHAPS SOME EASING OF INFLUX CONTROL IN THE FORM OF ALLOWING FAMILY HOUSING TO BE FURNISHED BY EMPLOYERS; RECOGNITION OF OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS NEGOTIATED THROUGH THE WELL-CONTROLLED BLACK LABOR COMMITTEES; PERHAPS INDUCTION OF ADDITIONAL COLOREDS OR BLACKS INTO ARMED FORCES SUPPORT UNITS; OTHER EASING OF PETY APARTHEID PRACTICES IN TERMS OF HOTELS, RECREATION AREAS, EATING ESTABLISHMENTS; THIS KIND OF THING IS WHAT WE DEEM MOST LIKELY TO BE DONE. CONSIDERABLY MORE MIGHT BE "POSSIBLE" (E.G., PROVIDING LONG TERM HOUSING LEASES FOR URBAN BLACKS WITHOUT REGARD TO HOMELAND CITIZENSHIP; VIGOROUS, POSITIVE ACTION TO INSTITUTE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUALLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS AS WELL AS OTHER WORKERS; FASTER PROGRESS TOWARD ADEQUATE IF NOT EQUAL EDUCATION FOR BLACKS) WITHOUT UPSETTING NATIONAL SECURITY OR RUNNING A SERIOUS RISK OF THE NATIONAL PARTY LOSING ITS PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL, BUT OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT VORSTER IS SIMPLY UNWILLING TO MOVE THAT FAR AHEAD OF HIS RANK AND FILE. WE SUSPECT HE NOT ONLY SEES SUCH DEGREE OF CHANGE AS TOO RISKY POLITICALLY BUT ALSO AS DISTASTEFUL SOCIALLY. THUS WHILE OUTSIDE PRESSURES MIGHT INDUCE S.A. TO VENTURE SOME CHANGES, THERE IS A LIMIT AS TO WHAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO DO EVEN UNDER PRESSURE.

5. COUPLED WITH THE ABOVE, ANTICIPATE A CONTINUED TIGHTENING OF SECURITY ACROSS THE BOARD. ANYONE WHO STEPS CLEARLY OUT OF LINE OR SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING INTO A POTENTIAL THREAT WILL BE INTIMIDATED , DETAINED, BANNED, OR BROUGHT TO TRIAL AND IMPRISONED VERY EARLY IN THE GAME. WE SEE VERY LITTLE CHANCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE SA APPROACH TO SECURITY MATTERS, BUT RECOGNIZE THAT A GREAT DEAL DEPENDS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ANGOLA SITUATION. A FEELING OF SECURITY HERE IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY CONTEMPLATION OF INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION.
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